

# HUNGER IN A WORLD OF PLENTY



There is food enough for all, yet hunger persists: 1.02 billion people are hungry worldwide. Simply put, one in seven people doesn't get enough to eat – and as many as half of them are children.

In fact, hunger is increasing dramatically in many parts of the world, due in part to a pervasive world food crisis and rocketing food prices that have pushed another 100 million into dire poverty.

For millions of the poorest people, food has become unaffordable. Most live in the so-called “developing world.” But hunger haunts us at home, too, and the number of poor and hungry among our fellow citizens continues to rise as a result of severe economic recession.

The world has made great strides in the struggle against hunger, but we're a long way from realizing the benchmark of the Millennium Development Goals to cut in half by 2015 the proportion of people who suffer hunger.

The roots of hunger are found in persistent poverty, war, corrupt governance, ignorance and disease – and more recently in inequitable trade patterns and the effects of climate change on water resources and local food production. The causes are interrelated, and they combine to produce increasingly critical levels of hunger, like the twisted roots of a weed choking the life from a tender plant.

There are solutions. Working together, we can build a world where there is enough for all.

***...if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,  
then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noon day.***

*Isaiah 58:10*



CHURCH WORLD SERVICE



Paul Jeffrey/ACT-CWS

**My experience... has given me an unshakable faith in the creativity of human beings. It leads me to believe that humans are not born to suffer the misery of hunger and poverty. They suffer now as they did in the past because we turn our heads away from this issue.**

*Muhammad Yunus, Nobel Peace Prize winner, 2006*

## THE FACE OF HUNGER

### Around the world:

- In a little less than two years, the number of people who are living in poverty has increased by 100 million and the number of people who are hungry by more than 75 million.

*Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and Population Reference Bureau*

- **1.02 billion people are undernourished worldwide** – more than one of every seven people on the planet.

*World Food Program (WFP)*

- **Each day almost 16,000 children die from hunger-related causes – one every five seconds.**

*The Lancet*

- Most of these people are not victims of famine, but suffer from what the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) calls a **“covert famine”** of chronic hunger and malnutrition, stunting childhood growth and development, sapping energy and potential.

*FAO*

- Hunger and malnutrition are the number one risk to global health, killing more people than AIDS, malaria and TB combined.

*WFP*

### At home:

- If all 36.2 million Americans faced with food insecurity stood in line at a food pantry in New York City, the line would stretch to Los Angeles and back. **Twice.**

*The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC)*

- **Over 37 million Americans lived in poverty in 2007, about 12.5 percent of the population.** Though most poor families in America are working families, the low wages earned by millions of Americans are not enough to cover the cost of housing, medical care, child care, transportation, clothing and food.

*U.S. Census/Bread for the World Institute, Hunger 2009*

- In November of 2008, **over 31 million people used SNAP/Food Stamps** — the second highest usage on record and an increase of 14.2 million from the year 2000.

*FRAC*



Paul Jeffrey/ACT-Caritas

## THE FACE OF HOPE

- Malnutrition affects one out of every three preschool-age children in developing countries. But research shows that increases in women’s status and education strongly influence the long- and short-term nutritional status of children, leading to reductions in both stunting and wasting. In South Asia alone, it is estimated that if women and men had equal status, there would be 13.4 million fewer malnourished small children.

*International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)*

- The lives of millions of children can be saved each year, at low cost, with vaccines and micronutrient supplementation. Almost every child can be reached with vaccines and supplements, even under the most difficult circumstances.

*UNICEF*

- Breastfeeding and complementary feeding can contribute to preventing 1.4 million and 600,000 child deaths respectively, or just over a fifth of the total child deaths, each year. Breastfeeding rates are no longer declining on a global level and have increased during the last decade in many countries.

*UNICEF*

- Climate change adaptation programs are helping growing numbers of poor, smallholder farmers reduce the vulnerability of their crops to increasing climatic uncertainties.

*The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)*



Paul Jeffrey for CWS

## THE CURRENT CONVERGENCE: A GLOBAL FOOD CRISIS

*Rocketing food prices are now pushing millions more into poverty and increasing the numbers of people who simply cannot afford to feed themselves and their families. Why has this happened?*

**Destructive weather and crop failures** have led to a decline in the supply of staple foods such as rice and wheat and an increase in their cost. Recent protracted droughts are potentially part of a much larger, long-term issue – climate change – with the likelihood of more severe droughts, floods and hurricanes and an increasing scarcity of usable and accessible land and water.

An **increase in the demand for bio-fuel sources** (especially corn, soybean and oil palm) is diverting land from food production and more diversified crops. In some regions, indigenous, ethnic and poor rural residents are being displaced from their traditional lands and robbed of the means to grow their own food.

**Speculation on commodities** for short-term profits has tended to inflate their value. For example, in 2007 wheat prices rose 77% and in 2008, rice prices shot up 141%.

*Overseas Development Institute*

**Increasing consumption of food, especially of grain-fed meat**, in both developed countries and rapidly developing countries like China and India, has helped fuel the increase in grain prices.

**Free trade, farm subsidies and other policies** have tended to undercut local farmers in developing countries. Developing countries have been required to stop supporting their own agricultural production and reduce barriers to trade. Once opened up to global trade, imports from stronger economies, often sold at less than the cost of production, have dominated their markets, putting local farmers out of business. Those who have remained in farming are encouraged to grow export crops. As a result, the countries are less self-sufficient in food and more vulnerable to the vagaries of commodity speculation.

*Understanding the Food Crisis, Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance*

**For the middle classes, [the food crisis] means cutting out medical care. For those living on \$2 a day, it means cutting out meat and taking children out of school. For those on \$1 a day, it means cutting out meat and vegetables and eating only cereals. And for those on \$.50 a day, it means total disaster.**

*Josette Sheeran, head of the U.N. World Food Program*

## ROOTS OF CHRONIC HUNGER

**Poverty: 1.4 billion people in developing countries live in extreme poverty, now calculated as living on an income of \$1.25 a day or less.** While poverty has declined in some areas, such as East Asia, in other regions, especially Africa, the number of persons living in extreme poverty has increased. *U.N. Millennium Development Goals*

**Debt:** Debt obligations, often amassed by long-gone leaders, leave vulnerable nations with vastly reduced resources to meet people's needs.

*Jubilee Network*

**Gender disparities:** In sub-Saharan Africa, women account for 60-80 percent of household food production. Yet women own only a fraction of the world's farmland and receive a fraction of agricultural extension services. Seventy percent of those who suffer from hunger worldwide are women and girls.

*FAO*

**Violence and militarism:** Civil conflict disrupts agriculture, uproots people, destroys infrastructure, increases debt from military expenditure, and drains precious resources from social programs. Landmines used in the conflicts leave a lethal legacy to returning farmers, their families, and their livestock.

*Grace at the Table*

**Increased population:** Increasing populations test the limits of fragile environments and further tax nations' abilities to meet their people's educational, health and nutritional needs.

*Grace at the Table*

**Lack of education and training:** Research indicates that education contributes significantly to reducing malnutrition while playing an important role in increasing productivity. Top priority should be given to improving access to quality education in rural areas – primary schooling, literacy and skills development.

*FAO*

# BUILDING A WORLD WITH ENOUGH FOR ALL

*Be the change you wish to see in the world.*

Mohandas Gandhi

Paul Jeffrey for CWS



*In September 2000, 189 countries including the U.S. endorsed the Millennium Development Goals to cut in half the percentage of people living in extreme poverty and substantially improve health and education in impoverished countries by 2015. These goals represent the clearest indication to date of a global consensus on the most pressing needs of the human family and specific, measurable goals to alleviate them: But crafting a world without hunger will require the best efforts of us all. Real progress is being made. Impoverished people are reclaiming their lives and their communities with the support of groups like Church World Service. Be part of the solution!*

**IMPROVE THE ODDS:** In Indonesia, after struggling for two decades with poor harvests and malnourished children, some of West Timor's poorest rural farmers now are successfully planting crops that provide better nutrition for their families, even in the face of climate change challenges. With training, farmers are abandoning slash-and-burn practices in favor of sustainable measures, such as terracing, composting, crop diversification and improved irrigation. CWS is helping them multiply their effectiveness by forming cooperatives and demonstrating how to use more of the food resources around them, including native vegetables that they didn't know were edible.



Paul Jeffrey/ACT-CWS

"There's no one answer. But some answers must begin now, to prevent future climate-impacted crop failures. And some answers must come urgently – to help malnourished infants and toddlers who may suffer developmental deficits or worse, and become a lost generation of children," says Maurice Bloem, CWS Deputy Director and Head of Programs.

## **EMPOWER YOUNG PEOPLE:**

The CWS-supported Giving Hope program assists young people in East Africa who have lost their parents and taken on the task of raising their younger siblings. Anthony at age 17 had to care for his five younger siblings after his parents died.

"I kept wishing that one day my siblings would resume school instead of moving from door-to-door, begging

for food. By the time I turned eighteen, I had lost all hope. Then came Giving Hope, and my life drastically changed. With their help I established a kitchen garden. From the kitchen garden sales, I was able to buy my siblings school uniforms and scholastic materials and they could go back to school with assistance from a local women's group. I was trained in small-scale income-generating activities and later assisted with tools and equipment to establish a barber shop. I have now expanded, opening an additional shop and employing three youth caregivers who are also heads of households. The future is smiling at me now!"



PEDRA

Some 31,000 young people have been touched by the Giving Hope Program in five countries in East Africa.

**SPEAK OUT!** The ecumenical community has an important contribution to make in the shaping of U.S. global policies. In these challenging times, our voices are especially vital. For this reason, Church World Service brought together an ecumenical group representing a number of our member denominations to make our shared policy concerns known to the new President and Administration. "A Policy Agenda for the New Administration" is endorsed by Church World Service, the National Council of Churches and nine of our member denominations, agencies or public policy offices, and summarizes key U.S. foreign policies that we urge the President and Congress to implement. Join us! You can read the statement at: [www.churchworldservice.org/policyagenda](http://www.churchworldservice.org/policyagenda).



REUTERS/Cheryl Ravelo, courtesy www.alertnet.org

## VOICES

In the final analysis, hunger is not measured in numbers. It is measured in people, in individuals with hopes and dreams like anyone else. These voices of hungry people speak to their reality and to our challenge.

***There is no food, there is no hope. If things do not improve, we will die.***

*Kwela Mwancili, grandmother, Kenya*

***Lack of work worries me. My children were hungry and I told them the rice was cooking, until they fell asleep from hunger.*** *Egypt*

***When you are hungry, you can't think about anything else.***

*Juana "Janie" Mendez, 17, USA*

***We poor people are invisible to others – just as blind people cannot see, they cannot see us.*** *Pakistan*



Antonia Paradelia/WFP

***Poverty is like living in jail, living under bondage, waiting to be free.***

*A young woman in Jamaica*



Rolanda Hughes/CWS

***We have decided to cut two of our three meals a day. We now have just one.***

*Mother of six, Haiti*

***What is poverty? To come home and see your children go hungry and not have anything to give them.*** *Brazil*



REUTERS/Rupak De Chowdhuri, courtesy www.alertnet.org

***We've had to stop buying milk for our two-year-old baby. What we earn now isn't enough to feed ourselves properly or buy medicines.*** *Guatemala*

***It wasn't my turn.*** *Response of a U.S. child who had fallen asleep at school when asked if he had eaten breakfast that morning.*

*Grace at the Table*

***Being poor is being always tired.***

*Kenya*

***Poverty (is) inherited. If you were born to a poor father, he cannot educate you and cannot give you any land, or very little land of poor quality; every generation gets poorer.*** *Uganda*

Many of these quotes come from a remarkable collection assembled by the World Bank at their website *Voices of the Poor*. (Available in text and video at [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org).)



Paul Jeffrey for CWS



Rolanda Hughes/CWS

# YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

## Support the work of Church World Service

- **Visit our website** at [www.churchworldservice.org](http://www.churchworldservice.org) for more information on CWS programs. Call us at 800-297-1516 to hear an update on our current work (Ext. 111) or to pledge your support (Ext. 222).
- **Call your CWS Regional Office** toll-free at 888-CWS-CROP (888-297-2767) to learn about CROP Hunger Walks, the Blankets+ Program, and the CWS Kit Program.
- **Consider CWS as you do your estate planning.** For more information call 800-297-1516 or [www.cwsplannedgift.org](http://www.cwsplannedgift.org).

## Learn more, teach others

- **Visit our website** for educational resources including *Making Poverty History*, a collection of participatory activities related to the Millennium Development Goals, and a listing of the free-loan media in our CWS Video and Film Library.
- CWS collaborated with the Presbyterian Hunger Program and Advocate Health Care in the development of ***Just Eating? Practicing Our Faith at the Table***. The seven-session resource for high school and adult congregational groups explores the relationship between our faith and food. You may download the material or order in printed form at [www.pcusa.org/hunger/features/justeating.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/hunger/features/justeating.htm).
- Tell others in your congregation, organization, and family what you have learned. Consider **organizing a hunger education event**, perhaps around World Food Day (Oct. 16). For more information on World Food Day see [www.worldfooddayusa.org](http://www.worldfooddayusa.org) or call 202-653-2404.

## Exercise your citizenship

- **Speak Out** for hungry people around the world using our **online advocacy resources**. All the tools you need to communicate with your elected representatives and the media are there: [www.churchworldservice.org/speakout](http://www.churchworldservice.org/speakout)
- Participate in **Bread for the World's annual Offering of Letters**. Campaigns address both domestic and international hunger concerns. For more information: [www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org) or 800-822-7323.

## Extend yourself

Volunteer at your local food pantry or soup kitchen. Organize a community garden project. Support your denominational hunger program.

## Other useful sites

Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance – [www.e-alliance.ch](http://www.e-alliance.ch)  
Hunger News and Hope – [www.seedspublishers.org](http://www.seedspublishers.org)  
World Hunger Education Service – [www.worldhunger.org](http://www.worldhunger.org)  
U.S. Agency for International Development – [www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov)

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- FAO: News release on education - [www.fao.org/newsroom/en/news/2005/1000164/index.html](http://www.fao.org/newsroom/en/news/2005/1000164/index.html)
- Food Research and Action Center (FRAC): [www.frac.org/html/hunger\\_in\\_the\\_us/hunger\\_index.html](http://www.frac.org/html/hunger_in_the_us/hunger_index.html)
- Global Policy Forum. *The Effect of the Food Crisis on Women*: [www.globalpolicy.org/soecon/hunger/general/2008/05women.htm](http://www.globalpolicy.org/soecon/hunger/general/2008/05women.htm)
- InterAction: [www.interaction.org](http://www.interaction.org)
- International Food Policy Research Institute: [www.ifpri.org](http://www.ifpri.org)
- International Fund for Agricultural Development. Climate Change Fact Sheet: [www.ifad.org/climate/factsheet/e.pdf](http://www.ifad.org/climate/factsheet/e.pdf)
- Jubilee USA Network. [www.jubileeusa.org](http://www.jubileeusa.org)
- Minnesota Food Share. Hunger Quotes: [www.gmcc.org/foodshare/images/HungerQuotes.pdf](http://www.gmcc.org/foodshare/images/HungerQuotes.pdf)
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On nutrition - [www.unicef.org/nutrition/index\\_24819.html](http://www.unicef.org/nutrition/index_24819.html)
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- World Food Program: [www.wfp.org/hunger](http://www.wfp.org/hunger)

*Oh, God, to those who have hunger, give bread. And to those who have bread, give a hunger for justice.*

*Latin American prayer*



## CHURCH WORLD SERVICE

Church World Service is a humanitarian agency and cooperative ministry of 35 Protestant, Orthodox, and Anglican denominations, providing sustainable self-help and development, disaster relief, and refugee assistance around the world.

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